



Student Veterans of America
1625 K St. NW STE 320
Washington DC 20006
www.studentveterans.org

February 21, 2014

Sen. Carlos Leone & Rep. Jack Hennessy
Committee on Veterans Affairs
State of Connecticut Legislature

Senator Leone and Representative Hennessy,

On behalf of Student Veterans of America (SVA), a coalition of student veteran organizations on over 950 colleges and universities across the country, I am writing to express our support of S.B. 212 and H.B. 5299, *An Act Concerning Implementation of the Recommendations of the Military Occupational Specialty Task Force* and *An Act Concerning the Findings of the Military Occupational Specialty Task Force*, respectively.

Veteran unemployment is a serious issue. There are 250,000 veterans in Connecticut, thousands of who are unemployed or underemployed. Nationally, veterans face higher unemployment rates than their civilian counterparts. In Connecticut, unemployment for recently returning veterans is above the state average, and unemployment for female veterans is particularly high.

The skills veterans learn in the military match those with civilian job licenses. This important legislation would permit veterans to obtain only those licenses for which they are qualified. A recent analysis of Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs data found substantial overlap between the training of the state's recently-separated veterans, state licenses that do not fully credit military experience, and current labor market needs. This legislation recommends streamlining the licensure process in locations with job vacancies that align directly with veterans' prior training and experience.

S.B. 212 and H.B. 5299 credits veterans with equivalent training and experience gained during their service to this country. Nothing in the legislation will undermine uniformity in training or testing. All employees will continue to be properly trained and tested to meet Connecticut standards, which remain as rigorous as ever. Both bills also eliminate redundant requirements, which are economically inefficient and harmful to both employers and veterans.

This legislation will incentivize EMTs who saved lives in Afghanistan to bring their valuable skills to Connecticut. Skilled electricians, police officers, those with a commercial drivers license, and countless others will be able to return home and go to work. A military spouse with a decade of teaching experience will be able to work immediately when she moves with her family to a Connecticut military base.



This legislation is good for everyone in the state of Connecticut, and streamlines the licensing procedure for jobs that often have annual openings and high rates of predicted growth over the next decade. It seeks to channel veterans into job sectors where employers report a strong and unmet need for qualified workers. Passage of this act will encourage skilled employees to move into the workforce more quickly, and returning veterans will be drawn to work in the state. More than twenty other states have already passed similar bills, attracting attention from the White House and veterans' groups nationwide.

S.B. 212 and H.B. 5299 show our veterans that "thank you for your service" is not a hollow phrase, but one that holds real meaning. I strongly urge the passing of this legislation to ensure that the measure of devotion every veteran has shown is received with real action.

Respectfully,

D. Wayne Robinson
Chief Executive Officer
Student Veterans of America